



Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet

Virginia Petty Makes Miniature Natural Material Baskets at Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

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BEREA, Ky. – On Saturday, Oct. 26, Virginia Petty, of Berea, will demonstrate how she creates her natural material sculptural baskets from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea.

Petty has been making baskets for many years and is primarily self-taught. Her work encompasses various mediums and techniques – and in this demonstration she utilizes both basketry and papermaking techniques. Petty collects natural materials and allows them to dry naturally. She uses the ‘bast’ or inner bark of numerous plants to create her paper.

“Nature provides a myriad of materials from which to choose. The natural curves of honeysuckle provide an interesting framework for basketry. The hickory bark used to make the paper for my baskets, comes from furniture maker Brian Boggs’ scrap materials,” Petty said.

“I cooked the hickory bark for four hours in lye, beat it for four hours in a Hollander beater and pulled it onto a screen, forming sheets of hickory paper that were dried in a press. These sheets are then used to cover alternate openings in my baskets.”

To make the rim of her baskets soft to the touch, Petty wraps it with strips of chamois. To embellish other openings in the form, she uses artificial sinew in a knotless netting technique.

Baskets by Virginia Petty are regularly available at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, located at 200 Artisan Way, just off Interstate 75 at Berea exit 77. The center’s exhibits, shopping and travel information areas are open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and the cafe is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is free.

Celebrating 10 years in 2013, the center currently features works by more than 650 artisans from more than 100 counties across the Commonwealth. Special exhibits on display are, “Capturing the Art of Sport: Works by Kentucky Artisans,” through Feb. 22, 2014, and lobby exhibits, “The Founding of the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea” and “Highlights of the First 10 Years,” through Nov. 17. For more information about the center’s events call 859-985-5448, visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kentucky.artisan.center, or go to the center’s website at www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov.

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is an agency in the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



Photos, left to right: A sculptural basket by Virginia Petty made from vine and hickory bark paper; Petty demonstrates her basket techniques at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea; a basket by Petty created from hickory bark paper over a structure of honeysuckle vines along with chamois and sinew.